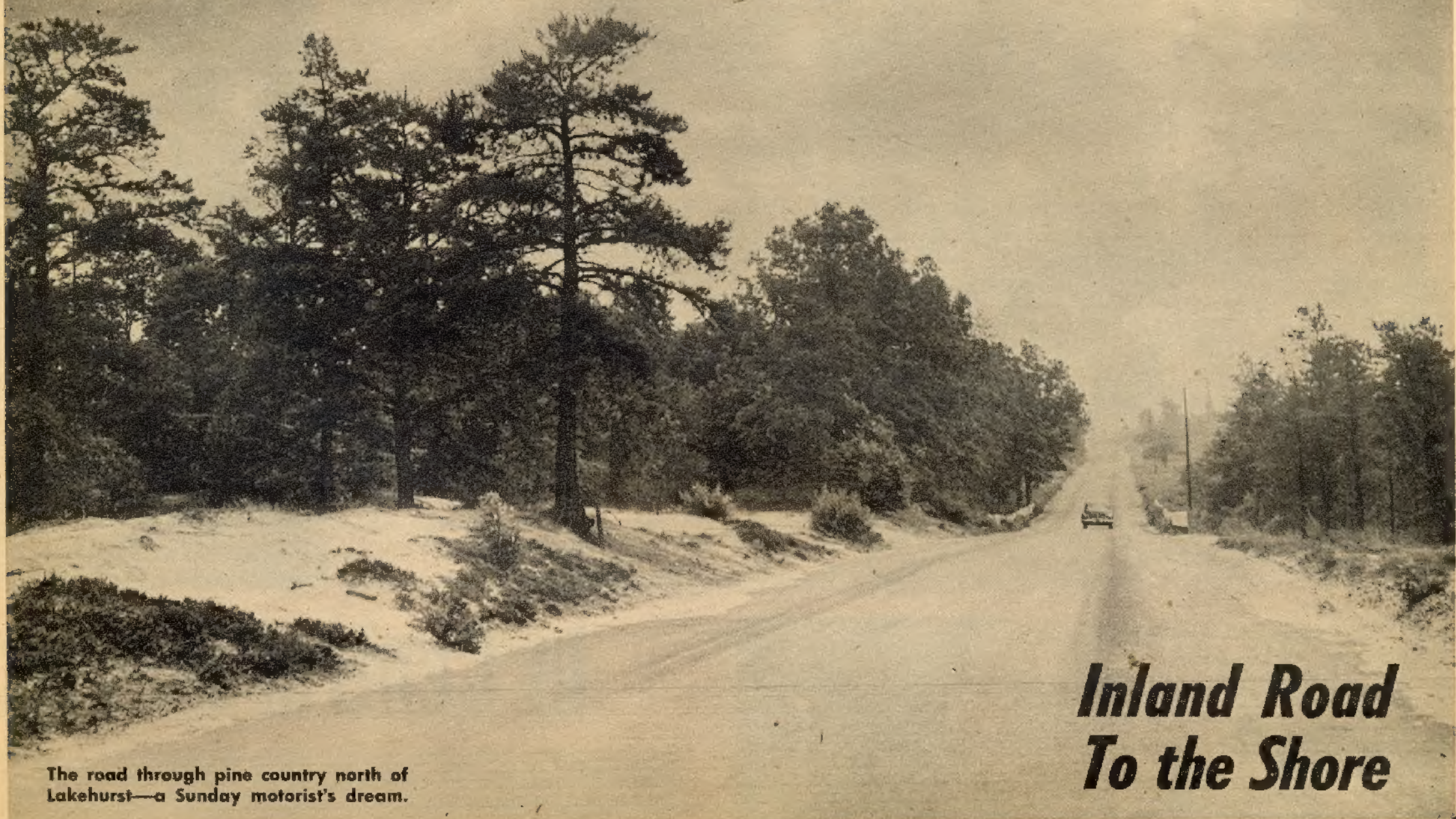


LET'S EXPLORE---



The road through pine country north of Lakehurst—a Sunday motorist's dream.

Inland Road To the Shore

Staff Photos, Dorer

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

THE surest way to get an inveterate shore visitor into an argument is to announce: "This is the best way to the shore." Even the thousands who every Sunday night ride bumper to bumper up the main routes, shouting "never again," will argue that the shortest route is the best route. Their unswerving loyalty to that principle is proved by their weekly return to the snail-like pace of traffic through Middlesex County.

Today's back route to Seaside Heights by way of Hightstown is longer than the main highways, but it touches traffic-clogged roads only briefly and in the long run might save time despite the added mileage. For anyone who prefers his country free of rampaging trucks, confusing neon lights and blatant horns, the dividends are great. The ride through towns like Cranbury, Hightstown and Cassville provides glimpses of country where 20th Century prosperity

blends with 18th Century charm. This is a part of Jersey seldom seen in the mad rush to the ocean.

Starting in Irvington, take Springfield avenue (Route 24) to the tricky overhead light just beyond Springfield, where roads, diners, used car lots and service stations vie for attention. Unused trolley tracks point the way as they bend to the left. Follow their direction, then keep right to the overhead blinker a few blocks beyond where a right turn at the blinker enters Springfield avenue, which continues all the way through Summit and New Providence to Berkeley Heights center, about seven miles beyond. Blinking lights on either side of the road in Berkeley Heights call for a left turn in Plainfield avenue.

Then, as the neat buildings and the spacious grounds of Bonnie Burn sanitarium appear on the left, turn sharply right under the "Watchung"

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In shade of stately oaks on road in Allentown is this old house built at time trees were planted.



St. Vladimir's Chapel, a 16th Century reproduction at Rova Farms, Russian settlement near Cassville.



Entrance to the long bridge over Barnegat Bay leading to Seaside Heights.



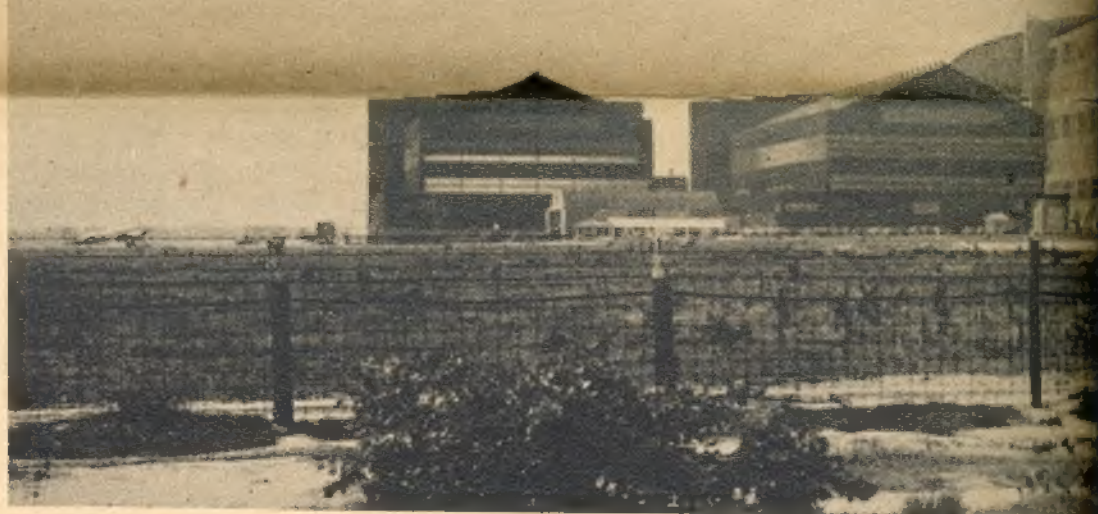
Brainerd Lake, Cranbury, named for David Brainerd, youthful missionary who converted Indians.



Once on main shore route, Imlaystown's single street has a 19th Century look.

In Central Jersey:

One of the giant hangars of the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, viewed from roadside.



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sign and follow signs to Route 29, where a crossing is made on a traffic light. The way through Plainfield (as the map inset shows) is easy by way of Somerset street, Park avenue and West Seventh street which joins Washington street in Dunnellen. Turn left, then right at the foot of the camel's hump bridge just beyond. At the "stop" street go left and beyond New Market look for Old New Brunswick road to wind all the way to the Raritan River for a crossing on Landing Bridge near Rutgers stadium.

OVER the bridge, turn right then left in Franklin boulevard (once called De Russy's lane at the time of the Hall-Mills case). This leads to Route 27, below New Brunswick. On Route 27 look for the few stores and gas station which mark the center of Franklin Park and just beyond the school turn left for Route 1. Turn right on "One" for about 300 feet and then take the next road to the left.

The crossing of Route 1 plunges the autoist abruptly into Central Jersey. Potato fields begin to appear in the vicinity of Deans, marking a decided change from the agricultural scenery to the north. Most impressive is the obvious age of the area, an impression that will persist all the way to

the shore. Old houses, either sparkling white or gray with weathered antiqueness, nestled coolly in the shadows of tremendous trees.

In Deans, turn right for Dayton and a junction with Route 25. Then, where signs say "dual highway ends," turn right off the highway to Cranbury, where the gracefulness of colonial days is tastefully mingled with the good life the surrounding potato fields have brought. The peacefulness of Cranbury's shaded streets accentuates the beauty of old houses which line the way. The town has been established 266 years and its First Presbyterian Church was built in 1734.

The unhurried pace of Cranbury is an invitation to stop, just as it has been through the years. The road through the center was once known as the old York road and Cranbury Inn, which dates back to 1780, numbers among its early guests George Washington and Alexander Hamilton. In 1804 Aaron Burr stayed overnight in a private home in Cranbury when he was fleeing across the state to Philadelphia after fatally wounding Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken.

ON the left past the town is Brainerd Lake, named for Rev. David Brainerd, the youthful missionary

who achieved lasting fame for his work with the Indians. Young David, a follower of George Whitefield, often preached to Indians under the lofty village elms of Cranbury. His name appears in church records throughout Central Jersey and after his death in 1747 at the age of 29 his diary continues as a guide to spiritual living. A giant lotus tree on the shores of the lake each Summer presents a beautiful sight.

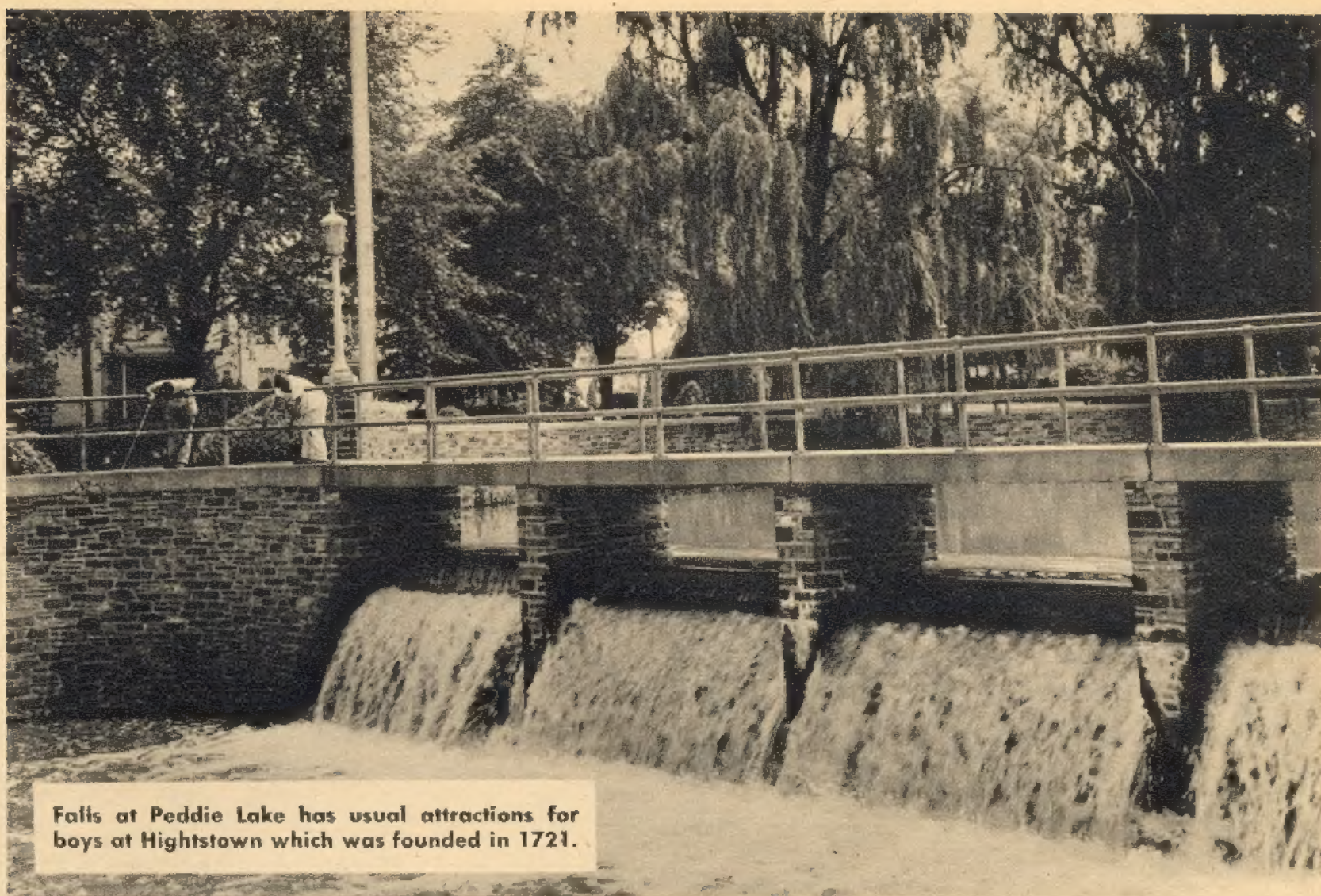
At the traffic circle beyond the town the road crosses Route 25 and continues through flat pastureland to Hightstown, completely in keeping with the mood established in Cranbury. John Hight, an early landowner and miller, founded the town in 1721. The uniqueness of Hightstown (and most Central Jersey towns) lie not in its age but rather in its careful preservation. Busy modern stores front on the streets but they supplement rather than supplant the colonial gracefulness of the homes, the churches and the spreading trees.

Hightstown is entered under railroad tracks where the road joins Route 33 at Peddie Lake on the left. Peddie School, established in 1864 as a private preparatory school for boys, is on the lake shore. Through Hightstown, keep left up the hill past the old First Baptist Church and



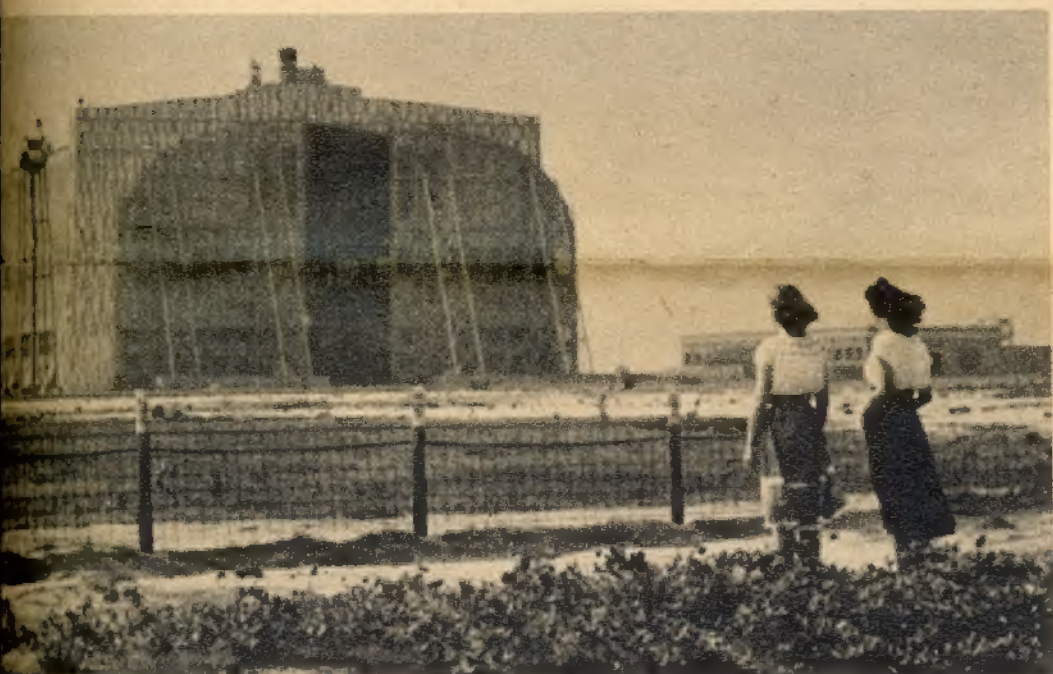
"Monarch of the field" is this 275-year-old tree. Historical landmark is under protection.

Visiting group strolling along road through pine forest near Lakehurst.



Falls at Peddie Lake has usual attractions for boys at Hightstown which was founded in 1721.

Scenic Pleasures Await Shore-Bound Motorists With Time to Escape from Traffic-Clogged Roads



Quiet charm of Hightstown street. At right is old First Presbyterian Church.



Old oak near New Sharon. Home of Mercer County and DAR.

the Peddie campus. Beyond Peddie the choice must be made: Do you want to hurry on or can you spare another half hour to see an area seldom touched by shore-bound motorists?

If this is one of the days when the lure of the waves supersede all else, then turn left at the sign which says "ETRA" in big letters and lists Jersey Homesteads and Clarksburg in smaller print. This is a good road, leading past the co-operative settlement established in 1935 and renamed Roosevelt after the President's death. In Clarksburg a road to the right heads for Holmeson, Cassville and Toms River.

AN extra half hour, however, will bring dividends in two other sides of the triangle, Hightstown to Allentown and Allentown to Holmeson. This is country much like the plantation lands of the South. Great farms surround the "big house." Each farm is a duplication of the pattern, with all of the buildings in a cluster of towering trees. Thousands of acres of potatoes grow on either side of the road, interspersed with billowing wheat or rye. Usually potatoes are ready for harvest at this time of year, but the wetness of May and June has delayed many of the farmers.

Mingled with the neat homes of the

farmers are aged and unpainted houses where the prosperity of the past is evident only in the soundness of the construction. These are houses to provoke "what a coat of paint would do" comments. If these were closer to New York they would long since have been repainted, linked with Washington's proclivity for sleeping and established as showplaces. Here they just stand under oaks which date back to before the Revolution.

The greatest of the oaks stands alone in a field about four miles south of Hightstown. Tremendous branches, scraggly with age, spread upward over the potatoes. A sign proclaiming the oak as "the monarch of the fields," declares "this grand old oak had already been growing for over a century" when the Declaration of Independence was signed. Until 1926 it was the victim of "advertisers, thoughtlessness and the elements," but now Mercer County and the DAR have combined to preserve the 275-year-old landmark. It is nearly 30 feet around at the ground and its protectors call it "one of the oldest and largest white oaks in the state."

South of the oak, beyond New Sharon and New Canton, a church steeple sticking up through the trees hints of Allentown, another prosperous town beneath the oaks. A left

turn is made at the bank and about a block beyond the town on this road is an old house almost hidden by two huge oaks. The position of the house behind the trees indicate the builder placed oak saplings on his front lawn when he built the house, so to guess the age of the tree is to guess the age of the house.

ABOUT four miles east of Allentown, where the road dips down and then up, a right turn at the Imlaystown Church will lead through the single street of Imlaystown. Once it was on the highway, and old residents remember "as many as 45 cars bumper to bumper" going through Imlaystown on a Sunday night. Now the village is by-passed and its dirt sidewalks, where small boys walk barefooted to the store, and old buildings which give the street a 19th Century flavor, attract many artists and people who like their history preserved. The road through Imlaystown leads directly back on the highway so the trip through its narrow crooked street is easily accomplished.

Beyond Holmeson the pine country is entered near a crossroad. Continue across the road and at the next two "Y" intersections continue bearing right for Cassville and Seaside.

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LET'S EXPLORE-- Inland Road To the Shore

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Heights. The roads to the left lead out to the shore around Point Pleasant and the pleasant pine country near Lakewood. The intensive cultivation of the Hightstown region has now passed and replacing it are thick scrub pine forests and yellowed sand. A few buildings are seen but it is apparent that prosperity is not easy to achieve in the sand and pines.

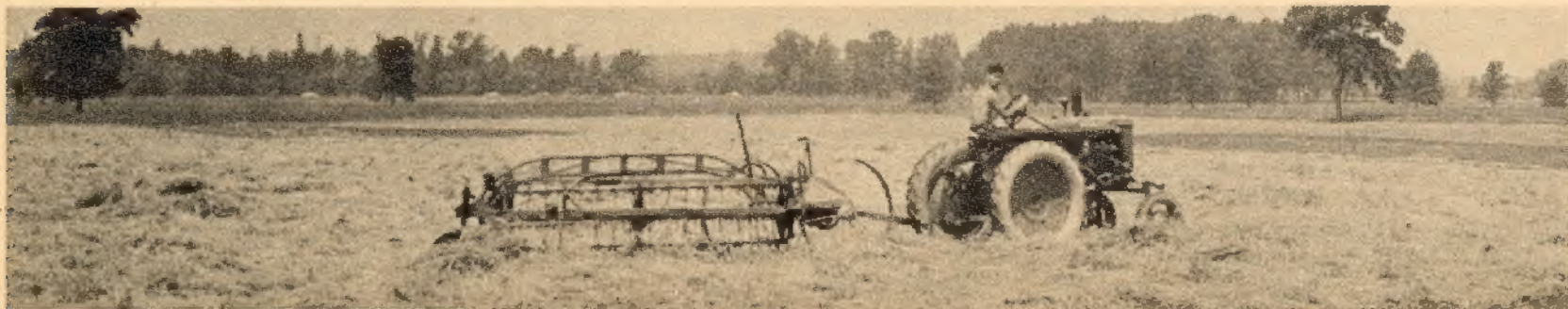
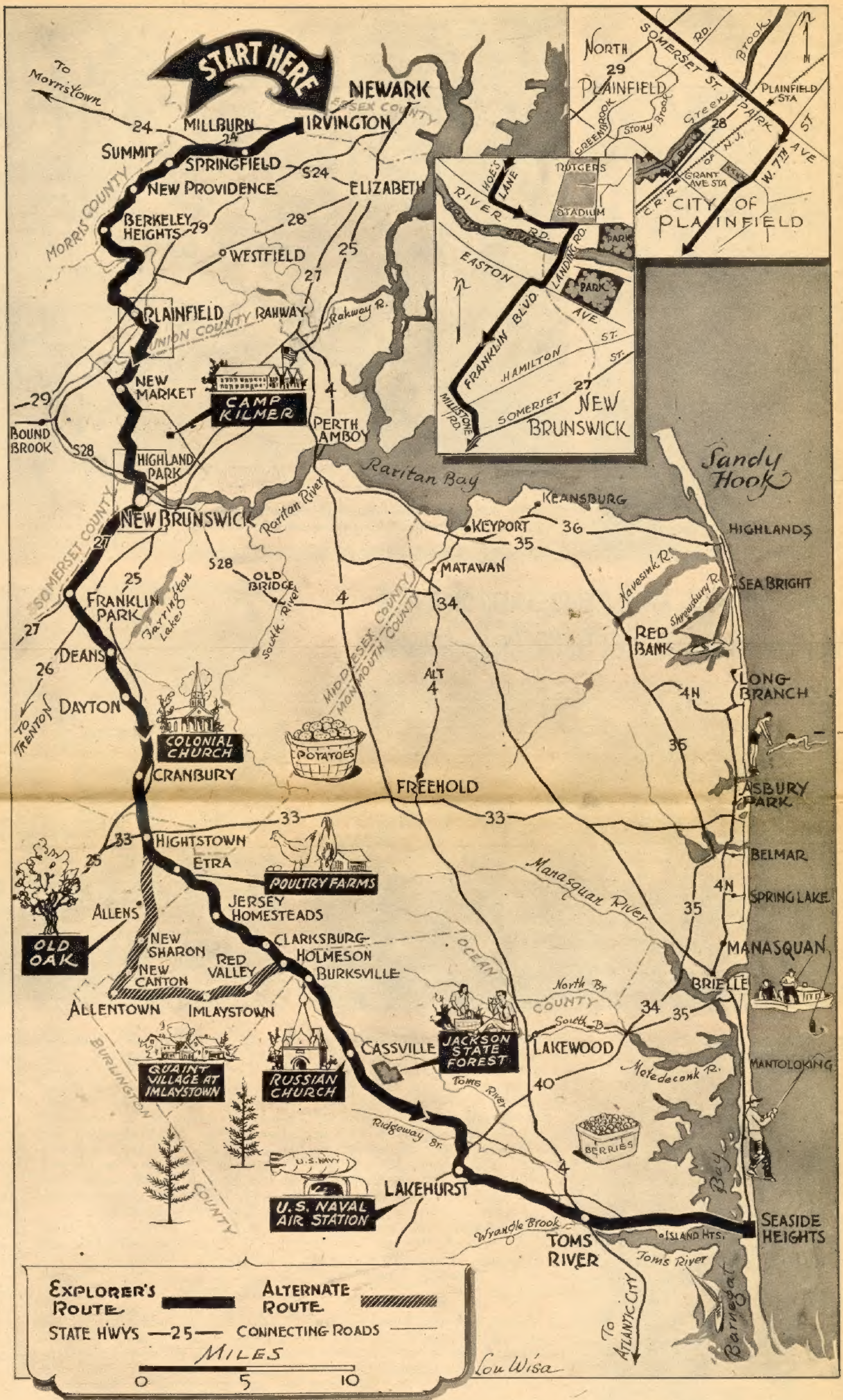
Just before Cassville the road rises slightly and as it begins to dip again one of New Jersey's most unique chapels appears on a hilltop to the right. Its odd oriental architecture makes St. Vladimir's Church, copied from a Russian Chapel of the 16th Century, a totally unanticipated sight. The tiny white building is the first indication of the Russian life to be found at Rova Farms, just beyond.

ROVA FARMS was founded primarily as an old age annuity farm by a Russian society. Buildings and farmlands surrounding a pond show the efforts of the Russian emigres to preserve the Russian tradition. The old age home in the woodlands to the left is named for A. S. Pushkin. A statue of Pushkin in a small park above the pond proclaims him to be the "creator of the Russian literary language." Also in the park are cornerstones for a library and a church. The church will be dedicated to St. Prince Vladimir, who converted Russians to Christianity in 988 A. D.

Several miles beyond Cassville the huge hangars at Lakehurst loom as gray shadows to the right and grow more distinct as a right turn is made at the traffic light on the road which passes close to the naval air station. Glimpses of blimps can be caught through hangar doors. The Cathedral of the Air, a small gray stone chapel at the far end of the reservation, is dedicated to flyers who have lost their lives in air accidents.

At the junction with Route 40, turn left, then at the traffic circle take Route 37 on the right to Toms River. Heavily-used Route 4 is crossed on a traffic light and the way is open to Seaside Heights over the long bridge which spans Barnegat Bay. The bridge is the one spot where long lines of cars may be encountered, because the bridge opens for boats, regardless of the number of the cars which pile up on either side.

The way home? Well, it's Sunday night and nearly every one will be lured by the straightness of the bright red line on the road map which leads directly to Freehold and Elizabeth. If you've fallen a victim to that temptation and it has been found somewhat short of ideal, why not try going back through Central Jersey? Surely it will save the aggravation of traffic, it might save time and the long way 'round could be the best way home.



ABOVE: Roundabout shore route touches main highways only briefly. Insets show way through Plainfield and New Brunswick.

LEFT: Tractor at work in hayfield on a big dairy farm in Central Jersey.